

A True and Strange

# RELATION

OF THE

Travels, Adventures, and great Persecution

Of FOUR Eminent

# Quakers

Who in the Year 1680, Travelled through France, Italy, and Turkey,  
to promote their RELIGION.

Wherein is fully Declared the Designs, Endeavours and Attempts  
of these Zealous Quakers, for the Conversion of the

Great **TURK** and the **POPE**.

With a perfect Account

Of the Event and Success of the Business, and of all the most remarkable Passages. As also a faithful Relation of their private Discourses and Disputes which passed between these Quakers and the Pope, the Cardinal his Cousin, and Cardinal Boisl.

Also of their VOYAGE to

# Constantinople,

And of their most Barbarous, cruel and bloody Death, by the Special Command of the Chief Governour the Great Turk.

Who caused their Hands to be chop'd off, their Tongues to be cut out, and their Eyes bored out, and each Man to have a sharp Wooden Stake run in at his Fundament quite through his Body.

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*Faithfully and compendiously related by John Elias Esq; who was an Eye-witness to a great part of these Transactions in Constantinople.*

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With Allowance.

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*The True and Strange Relation of the Travels, Adventures, and great Persecution, of four Eminent QUAKERS, &c.*

**I**T was towards the end of *March*, in the year 1670, that *Fohn Watson, William Stubbs, Nathaniel Golden, and Rowland Fenkins*, all eminently known to be *Leading-men* among the *Quakers*: It was I say, about that time that these men said they had the *Spirit of Burning*, and the *Holy Anointing* in them, and were called and sent by God to preach the *Everlasting Gospel* to the *Nations* and *Heathens*. And they said that the *Child Jesus* within them, had assured them of great success, and that the Lord would be wonderfully with them in this *Dispensation*, that they should breake the *Bread of Life* to the *Nations*, and that the *Springs of Life* should break forth out of their Bellies. It is a wonder to see what strange effects and boldness these *Enthusiastical persuasions* and *Phanatical Dreams* caused in these poor men. They were now swelled with hopes and expectation of Wonders. They now resolved to leave *England*, and embark for *France*, and begin this *great work* of converting *Nations* and *Heathens*.

*Reader*, I do intend to give you a true and impartial account of these mens actions in *Forreign parts*, as I have received it from their own mouths, and also been fully and faithfully informed by several other persons of known worth and Integrity, who were eye-witnesses to the same.

*Fohn Watson* was a Gentleman of a pretty considerable estate and been well Educated, he had spent some years at the *University*, and had also formerly been a Traveller into *France, Spain, and Italy*, all which Languages he thoroughly understood, and spake very fluently. The other three were plain Country-men, and knew no other Language but their own, but perswaded themselves they should have the *Gift of Tongues*, and be indued with power from above.

In *Easter Week* they took Shipping at *Dover*, and were soon waisted over to *Calis*. I find not that they had any Impulse of Spirit to say or attempt any thing, but that they travelled on very peaceably and quietly, paying for what they had, and so came to the great City *Paris*, where they spent two days only, and then



advanced towards *Lyons*, where they continued about a Fort-  
night. Here it was that the tumultuous Spirit began first to shew  
it self to the *French Nation*. On *April 27*. *William Stubbs* said he  
had received a command from God to speak; and he signified as  
much to *John Watson* and the rest. On the next day which was  
Sunday, about 10 of the Clock in the Forenoon, they went all  
four to the great *Cathedral*, or *St. Johns Church*; where they were  
celebrating high *Mass* (as they call it) about the middle of the  
*Mass*, *William Stubbs* on a sudden climbs over the Rails and  
goes up to the High Alter, where as he was beginning his Dis-  
course in *English* (for as yet he had not received his *gift of tongues*)  
the *Church-Officers* presently lay hands on him and carry him out,  
and commit him to Prison until the next day. On *Munday* the  
Officers have him before the Magistrate, who refuses to meddle  
in this case, but causes him forthwith to be sent to the Arch-Bi-  
shop. The Arch-Bishop is highly offended with him for his bold  
attempt, and resolves to punish him with all severity imaginable,  
he remits him to Prison, and orders that the next day at 10 of the  
Clock in the morning, he be brought before him again. On  
*Tuesday* he is strictly examined what his intentions were, and  
how he durst be so bold to commit so great a Crime in so publick  
and confident manner; His answers were altogether imperti-  
nent, and withal so sawcy, that the Bishop sent him to the *House*  
*of Correction* where he was soundly lashed. On *Friday* morning  
the Bishop ordered him to be brought before him again; and  
seemed to be much incensed against this poor Quaker: Now the  
reason why his Grace was so fierce against this poor man, was,  
because of his Servants had maliciously suggested to him that he  
was set on and encouraged to offer this publick affront to their  
Divine Service, by some of the *Hugonot* Ministers; which was  
a most malicious untruth, for as yet these Quakers had not had  
any of the least correspondence or converse with any Protestant  
in *France*, as they did all very soberly attest to me in *Italy*. The  
Bishop was resolved to give him a full hearing, and to sift the  
business to the bottom. He asked him if he was not set on to  
this irreverent action by the *Hugonot* Ministers? He replied no,  
he was moved by the Spirit of God within him, and that it was

the *Spirit of Burning* and the *Holy Anointing* that had caused him to do as he had done. And here he entred into a long discourse, telling the Arch-Bishop, and the *Canons* who were there present, that the Law of God was written upon mens hearts, and that now the time was come that they should be taught of God. Now the Lords people were all to be Prophets, they were all to have fresh Springs arise in their hearts. And that the Lord had sent him and three Friends more into these parts, to break the bread of Life to the Nations, to open the hidden Mysteries of Christs Kingdom, to overthrow the *Babylonish Practices of Rome*, to break the Serpents Head, and wound the great *Leviathan*.

The *Arch-Bishop*, the *Canons*, and the whole Company were much astonished at this mans confidence, and his wild and Frantick discourse and answers, and began now to relent, and to pity this poor man, and look upon him as a Mad-man, and one out of his senses, and so accordingly gave order to have him to the Hospital of Mad People, and there carefully to be looked after until he gave further order.

About a week after this, 3 *English* Gentlemen hearing what had passed, and how that an *English* man who was mad, was committed to the Hospital of Mad-men: The Gentlemen went immediately to the Hospital to enquire the truth of the matter, when they came, the Keeper very courteously informed them of the whole business, brought them to the sight of *Stubbs*; who was locked up in a small Cell by himself, and an Iron Chain about his Leg, and his head shaved (for it is the custome there to shave all mad people.) When the Gentleman came in, they found him sitting in a melancholly sullen posture: he would not so much as look up or speak one word to them, for the space of above an hour, notwithstanding they spoke very kindly to him, and asked him concerning his conditior, and the causes of his Distemper, and promised him all the assistance and kindness that lay in their power: at last this sullen Spirit was overcome, and he began to enter into a long discourse of the Spirit within him, and that God had sent him and his three friends to break in pieces the great *Leviathan of Rome*. Now the Gentlemen quickly perceived his Spirit, and plainly discovered him to be no Mad-man, but



but a Quaker. They asked him concerning his other friends where they were? And withal promised to do their utmost for his Releasement, and so giving the Keeper some Money to be kind to their Country-man, they bid him farewell. At evening they went to the Inn to visit the other three Quakers, and had much discourse with them, endeavouring to persuade them to desist from this so hazardous and fruitless an enterprize, and speedily to return to their own Country, demonstrating the great dangers and inconveniences they would thrust themselves upon, if they did still persist, or any farther prosecute this fond and ridiculous undertaking; and so they parted. The next day they addressed to the Arch-Bishop, who was pleased to entertain them with much civility and respect. They returned humble thanks to his Grace for his great care of their Country-man, in sending him to such a place where he was so well accommodated in all things in order to his Cure, and withal, represented to his Grace his condition, quality and Religion; and how that he was not a Mad-man, but one of those *Sectarians* which in *England* are called Quaker. And withal, informed the Arch-Bishop and Canons, how that party do desire to appear different from all others in their manner of speech, their apparel, and manners. And also humbly Petitioned his Grace for a Releasement, promising within a day or two to dispatch them out of the Town; The Arch-Bishop readily condescended to all their demands, and presently gave order that *Stubbs* should be set at Liberty, which was accordingly performed. And the day following they all four left the Town, and hastened their Journey to *Italy*.

When they came to *Milano* in *Italy*, they had another Enthusiastical impulse of Spirit. And now *Fohn Watson*, *Nathaniel Golden* and *Rowland Fenkins*, who had hitherto been silent, or (as they expressed it themselves) *humbly waiting at the feet of Jesus*, who had now given them command to begin to Preach the *Everlasting Gospel* to the *Italians*. Here *Stubbs* accompanied with his three friends, did now (as formerly at *Lyons* in *France*) upon *Sunday* enter the *Domo* or *Cathedral* of the City, and made a great and publick disturbance when they were in the heighth of their Solemnities. *Watson* began to make a discourse in *Itali-*

an, but was presently seized and carried forth, and had before a Magistrate, who forthwith committed them all four to Prison, but withal, gave order they should be civilly used, and lack for nothing until further order; about four or five days after, they were commanded to appear before the Governour of *Milan* himself, who was resolved to have a full account of the matter. The Governour when he saw their uncivil behaviour, their sullen looks, and heard their wild discourses, he presently concluded them Mad-men, and gave order to have them confined and carefully looked after, and also appointed two Physicians to visit them, and to do their utmost for their recovery. The Physicians presently made a visit to the Hospital, and had a long discourse with *Watson*, (who spoke *Italian* well) and then returned to the Governour to give him their judgements of the business, they told his Excellence that they were mad, as did evidently appear to them by their very countenance and manner of Discourse: and that one of them (meaning *Stubbs*) had a manifest and signal token of his distemper, viz. his head was shaven according to the usual Practise of all Physicians in the world. They added also that they did verily believe they were *Dutch-men*, who made an escape from their Keepers. The Governour was well satisfied with this account the Physicians gave of the Quakers, and accordingly ordered them to take care of them, and let no means be wanting that might be used for their recovery, and that they should be used with all tenderness imaginable. The Doctors all the time of their Imprisonment causing their heads to be shaven, letting them blood, and Purging them so excessively, that *For-dan* after a fortnights confinement, being in a melancholly humour, he gave up the Ghost. The other three by Purging and bleeding, were brought very low, the Physicians were very much disheartned and did altogether despair of their recovery, and did signifie as much to the Governour, withal telling his Excellence that they supposed it was some *Religious Melancholly* that these men were afflicted with, and that it was insufferable and not to be overcome by any Art, and so desired the Governour to release them, which was accordingly performed; And towards the beginning of *June* they left *Milano* and set forward for *Rome*; for to convert the great *Leviathan* the Pope.

*June*



*June* the 18 they came to *Rome*, the place they so much desired to see, upon the *Sunday* following, they according to their old Custome, entred a little Church called *San Facomo Scozza Cavalli*, where *Watson* made a fierce and zealous discourse against the *Babylonish Idolatry* of that City, and said that the *Pope*, who was the *Man of Sin* and the great *Leviathan*, was now to be crushed in pieces, and God had sent them from the utmost parts of the earth to convert that City, and to confound the *Pope* and all his *Adherents*, and that now God would pour out the full Vials of his wrath and fierce indignation upon them, and bring them all to utter Ruine, shame and confusion.

*The Conference of Cardinal Pool with the English Quakers, and how he brought them before the Pope.*

These poor *Quakers* had not been a Month in *Rome*, but the whole City took great notice of them, and generally condoled their condition, as being distracted and far from their own country, *July 6* Cardinal *Pool* hearing much of these mens frantick actions, was very desirous out of curiosity to see them, and to discourse with them; hereupon he caused them to be brought before him, and was pleased with much patience to discourse an hour with them, and then civilly dismissed them, and sent them to their Lodgings. About two days after he made report to the Cardinal his Cousin, and to the *Pope* himself of what had happened, and of the strange enthusiasms of these 3 English *Pazzi* (for so he always termed them) and how they had a great desire to have some conference with his Holiness, and that they affirmed that God had sent them to deliver some secret Revelations to him. The *Pope* at first was a little surprized at the news, and gave order to have them privately brought before him and the two Cardinals. When they were admitted into the presence, *Watson* saluted the *Pope* with this address. *Art thou that Man of Sin, that Antichrist and great Leviathan, Verily God hath raised us up from the utmost parts of the Earth to preach the everlasting Gospel to thee, and to convert thee from thy Idolatrous errors and sinful ways, unto the true way and to the Light, &c.* The *Pope* was amazed.

zed at this strange confidence, and did really believe that the common report had not at all belyed them, but that they were very much distempered in their minds, and distracted, and gave a strict command that none should offer any violence to them, but withal privately appointed some of the English Colledge to persuade them to return home, or else to take charge of them in their Colledge, and not let them thus run about the City disturbing the people. This was effected according to the Popes desire, for about the end of *July*, seeing how unsuccessful their endeavours had been, they resolved to leave that *Babylonian City*, and go preach the Gospel to the *Turks* and *Mahometans*. In order thereunto, they took Shipping for *Constantinople*, where within two Months they safely arrived.

They had not been above a fortnight in that great City, but they went into the *Mahometans Mosco's* and *Temples*, and caused great tumult among the people. For this offence they were condemned to be bastinado'd, *i. e.* to receive three hundred blows upon the soles of their Feet, which was accordingly executed with that extremity of rigor and cruelty, so that in few days the putrified flesh came off from the bones, which was a miserable spectacle to behold. But this spirit of Quakerism had so Transported and infatuated them, that they got wooden Crutches, and once more went to their prophane *Mosco's*, and caused a much greater disturbance then before. Hereupon the *Turks* were sore vexed, and presently had them before the *Mufti* himself, who forthwith in a great fury and rage passed this cruel sentence upon them, *viz.* That they were to have their hands chopt off, their Tongues cut out, their Eyes cut out, and each Man to have a sharp Wooden Stake run in at his Fundament, and so quite through his body, all which was accordingly put in execution: And so these poor wretches after all their sufferings, ended their miserable Lives.



